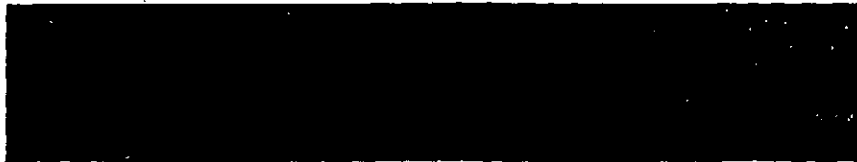




Directorate of  
Intelligence

**879**  
~~Secret~~

M  
HC



## Chile: Pinochet and the Military



An Intelligence Assessment

Declassified and  
Approved for Release  
July 2000

NOT MICROFILMED

*Color-Coded Map*  
For Data Entry

~~Secret~~



Copy 319

8000

198



Directorate of  
Intelligence

~~Secret~~

# Chile: Pinochet and the Military

An Intelligence Assessment

Reverse Blank

~~Secret~~

Warning Notice

Intelligence Sources  
or Methods Involved

[REDACTED]

National Security  
Information

Unauthorized Disclosure  
Subject to Criminal Sanctions

Dissemination Control  
Abbreviations

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Classified by [REDACTED]  
Declassify: OADR  
Derived from multiple sources

All material on this page  
is Unclassified.

~~Secret~~

## Chile: Pinochet and the Military

### Key Judgments

*Information available  
as of 20 March 1987  
was used in this report.*

We believe that the central issue facing Chile over the next two years will be whether President Pinochet can achieve his goal of retaining power after his term ends in March 1989.

in our view, Pinochet probably will be hard pressed to sustain his military support—including his power base in the Army—unless he shows more flexibility on political liberalization and pledges not to remain in office indefinitely.

Intransigence by Pinochet on such matters would, in our view, damage US interests in Chile. The prospect of Pinochet as President-for-life would erode the reputation of the armed forces with the Chilean public, provoke substantial dissension within the services, and increase the possibility of the Communist-dominated left mounting an all-out insurgency to topple the regime. Should Pinochet leave office by 1989, however, we judge that support for leftist violence would wane and that Chile would have a good chance of reestablishing stable, democratic institutions.

Pinochet has shown great skill as a political strategist and manipulator of the armed forces since the 1973 coup that ushered in Chile's only prolonged period of military rule in this century. He has monopolized both the presidency and the office of Army commander, effectively subordinated the four-man military junta, and kept the military as an institution out of the policymaking process. At the same time, Pinochet co-opted the armed forces by substantially enlarging both the size and budget of all the services except the militarized national police. He more than doubled the number of officers, boosted their salaries and other benefits, filled his large presidential staff with military aides, and detailed active duty or retired officers to top posts in regional and local administrations, the national government, and in state-owned enterprises. In all of these actions, Pinochet has consistently given special preference to the Army and its senior officers.

~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~


in our view, Pinochet seems more and more disposed to override or ignore the wishes of senior military officers. While Pinochet's position was temporarily strengthened by the discovery in August 1986 of huge arms caches supplied by Cuba to Chilean subversives and by the following month's assassination attempt on the President, his attempts to exploit these events to harass the moderate opposition, cow his junta critics, and buttress his chances of retaining power beyond 1989 produced a backlash even among progovernment groups and considerable grumbling among senior military officers. During recent months Pinochet's three junta critics have bypassed the President and have begun to deal openly with moderate opposition leaders to establish a formula for a negotiated transition to civilian rule. [REDACTED]

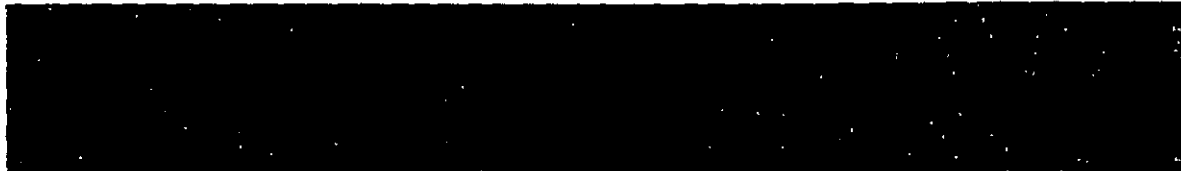
In our judgment, because of their tense relationship with Pinochet, senior military officers probably will eventually decide to confront the President and insist that he step aside at the end of his term. We believe they will initially try to persuade Pinochet to accept a negotiated transition and, if he does not heed their advice on this score, ultimately demand that he stop his efforts to run as the government's candidate in a presidential plebiscite. We assume that Pinochet will remain obdurate and expect that by mid-1988 senior military officers—convinced that he could not win in a fair vote and fearing that his continued rule would indirectly aid the revolutionary left and discredit the military—will force him from office if he persists in trying to retain power. [REDACTED]

We also believe that the military could move earlier than mid-1988 against Pinochet in reaction to a variety of possible preemptory actions on his part. In our view, the revived Letelier case, for example, has the potential of becoming a major crisis if Pinochet retaliates against those who want the case cleared up or who "know too much," including retired military officers, with the result that he could alienate the armed forces and perhaps precipitate a move by senior officers to oust him in the coming months. Under any of these circumstances, however, we anticipate that discussions among senior officers who plan to confront Pinochet would be very closely held and that any move against him would catch most Chileans [REDACTED] by surprise. [REDACTED]

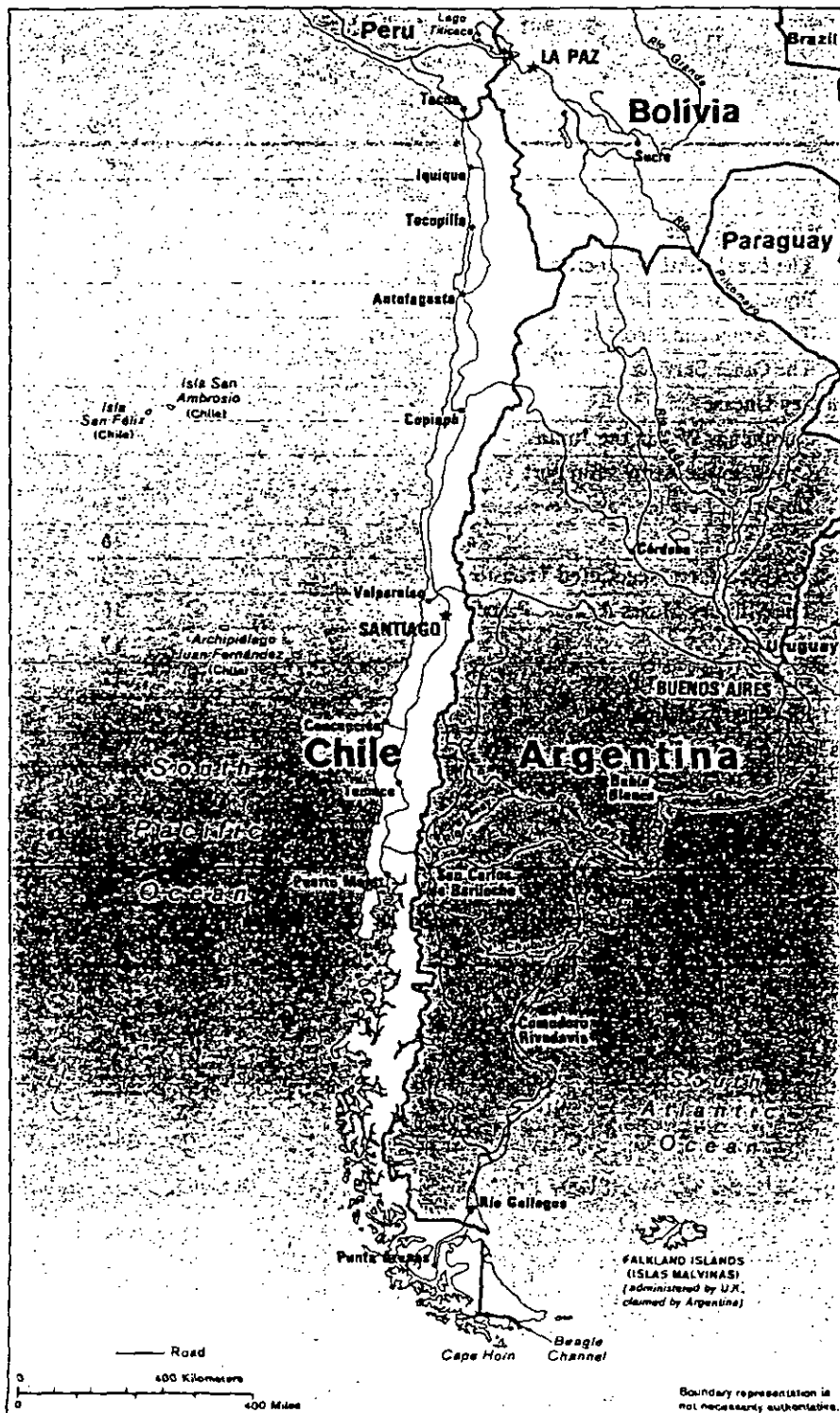
~~Secret~~

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Introduction	1
The Chilean Military Regime	1
The Break With Democracy	1
Pinochet as Sole Decisionmaker	2
The Army and Pinochet	4
The Other Services	7
	8
Rumblings Within the Junta	12
Cracks in the Army's Support	14
Impact of Letelier Case Revelations	15
Outlook	16
Prospects for a Negotiated Transition	16
The Military Moves Against Pinochet	16
Alternative Scenarios	17
Pinochet Stays in Power	17
Pinochet Assassinated	18
Implications for the United States	18



Secret



~~Secret~~

## Chile: Pinochet and the Military

### Introduction

The Chilean armed forces are the nation's chief power broker and constitute President Pinochet's primary source of political support. We believe they will determine whether Pinochet stays in office until the end of his term in March 1989 or retains power into the 1990s, as seems to be his intention. The Army clearly is the dominant service, but representatives of all four services are on the military junta and share governing responsibilities with the President. Soon after the 1973 coup against Marxist President Salvador Allende, however, Pinochet established himself as the ultimate authority, and he has since skillfully manipulated the Army and the other services to ensure their loyalty. Nevertheless, public opposition to Pinochet has steadily mounted in recent years, his popularity is at an alltime low,

and even senior military officers are saying publicly that the country must return to democracy in 1989.

### The Chilean Military Regime

#### The Break With Democracy

In 1973 the armed forces ended a long tradition of noninterference in politics by ousting the elected Marxist government because the officer corps felt the country was headed toward economic collapse, political polarization, and a breakdown of law and order. The coup was supported by most middle- and upper-class-oriented political parties, professional associations, industrial and business interests, and even by elements in the lower classes and organized labor. According to journalistic and scholarly studies, most political leaders expected the military to retain power only long enough to weed out Allende supporters from the bureaucracy, dismantle various armed leftist revolutionary groups, and restore a semblance of order to the economy and the political system before scheduling new presidential and congressional elections.

It soon became apparent, however, that the new military rulers intended to stay in power for a prolonged period in order to "extirpate the cancer of Marxism"—as one junta member publicly announced—create a more politically disciplined state, and reorder the economy along free enterprise lines. In addition, they resented their former inferior social status and scant political influence and wanted to enhance permanently the social position of the armed forces, according to several academic studies. The military used radical and violent means to establish its new order: in the crackdown after the coup, the security services executed at least 5,000 persons, arrested over 50,000, and either shut down or severely curtailed the autonomy of Congress, the political

~~Secret~~



~~Secret~~

parties, universities, the media, and trade unions, according to the same studies. Military officers initially filled most cabinet posts, but then turned to a group of civilian technocrats to implement free market economic changes and to several conservative Catholic theoreticians to help formulate the regime's political ideology. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] several academic experts conclude that over the past 13 years the armed forces hierarchy has developed a comprehensive perceptual framework to guide the thinking of military personnel regarding their institution's present and future role in national affairs. The key components are the military's:

- Conviction that the armed forces, as the foremost exponents of Chilean nationalism and defenders of national security, deserve a permanent voice in molding Chile's political process.
  - Belief that most violence committed by the military since 1973 was justified and that the military should not be tried for alleged human rights abuses.
  - Vigorous anti-Communism and a visceral distrust of politicians for their role in mismanaging the previous political system, combined with recognition of the need to eventually restore elected civilian government in the form of a "protected" democracy that avoids "excesses" of the past.
  - Support for the 1980 Constitution, which establishes a timetable to transfer power to civilians when Pinochet's term ends in March 1989 while providing for a continuing political role for the military.
  - Loyalty to Pinochet as President and Commander in Chief tempered by primary devotion to the armed forces as an institution and determination to maintain its integrity and autonomy.
- [REDACTED]

In our view, the government's continuous campaign to indoctrinate military personnel at all levels has had mixed results, especially from the perspective of Pinochet's efforts to perpetuate his hold on the presidency. For instance, we believe that, while most officers are convinced that the armed forces saved Chile from chaos and strongly support Pinochet's personal leadership, they are nevertheless committed to the notion that there must be a transition to a stable democracy and that Pinochet is obligated to begin this process no later than the end of his current term. [REDACTED]

#### Pinochet as Sole Decisionmaker

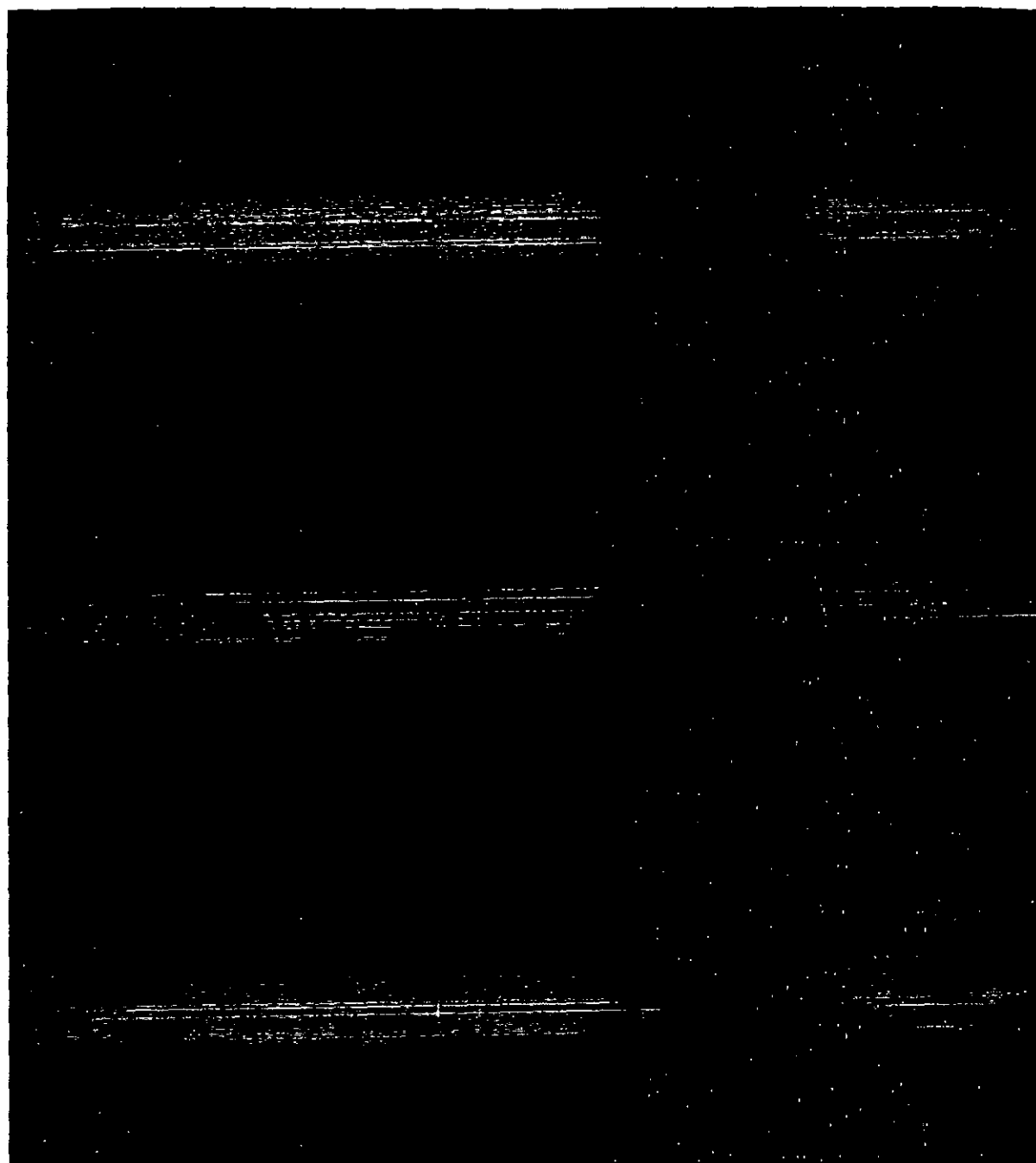
Pinochet's long stranglehold on both the presidency and the office of Army commander strongly affects his relations with his military constituency. Whereas senior officers in other Latin American countries have shared power with military presidents, Pinochet has prevented the Chilean military from developing institutional procedures to debate, much less decide, political questions. [REDACTED] He has fostered the concept that the armed forces are apolitical—the Constitution calls them "nondeliberative"—maintaining that only the junta reviews national policy, which the service commanders then transmit to their subordinates. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]


Pinochet, in our view, has shown great skill as a political strategist and manipulator of the military. He has capitalized on the military's long tradition of discipline and respect for hierarchy—the Chilean Army prides itself on its Prussian-style training—to retire all of the original Army coup plotters who might have demanded a say in policymaking, and in 1978 forced out the Air Force representative on the

~~Secret~~


~~Secret~~



~~Secret~~

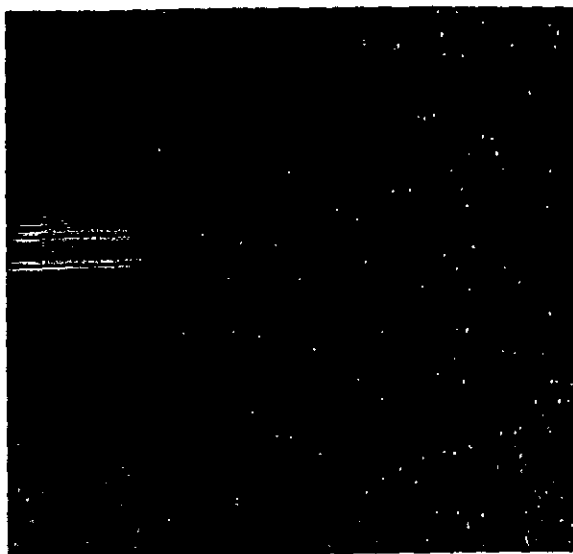



*Military Expenditures.* The government has released few details on the armed forces budget since the 1973 coup, but, according to several academic studies, such expenditures jumped sharply soon after the coup and continued to rise in succeeding years. For instance, according to one study, spending on the military—which had been relatively stable since the 1950s—grew from 2.3 percent of GNP in 1971 to 5.8 percent in 1978, and an estimated 9.4 percent in 1979. Data from the 1986 national budget placed military allocations at 12 percent of the total—a jump of 16 percent over the 1985 figure, according to the US Embassy. Press accounts note that these published figures, however, do not include some outlays for the military, such as the substantial sums spent on military pensions.



junta, a potential rival who publicly urged an early transition to civilian rule. Although Pinochet sharply reduced public expenditures and the number of government employees during his first seven years in office, he substantially expanded the size of the armed forces during this period, according to academic studies. Indeed, as these studies indicate, Chile currently devotes a larger share of its GDP to military expenditures and has a higher percentage of its population under arms than any other South American country.

Pinochet has also boosted officers' salaries and benefits, which previously were austere by Latin American standards.



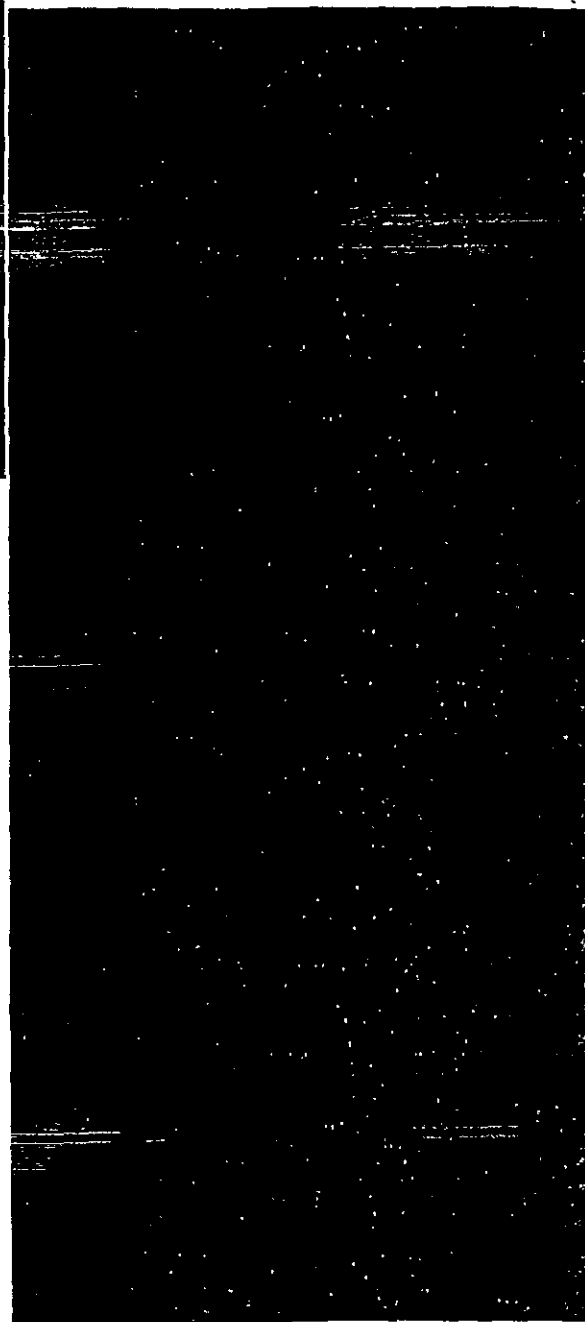
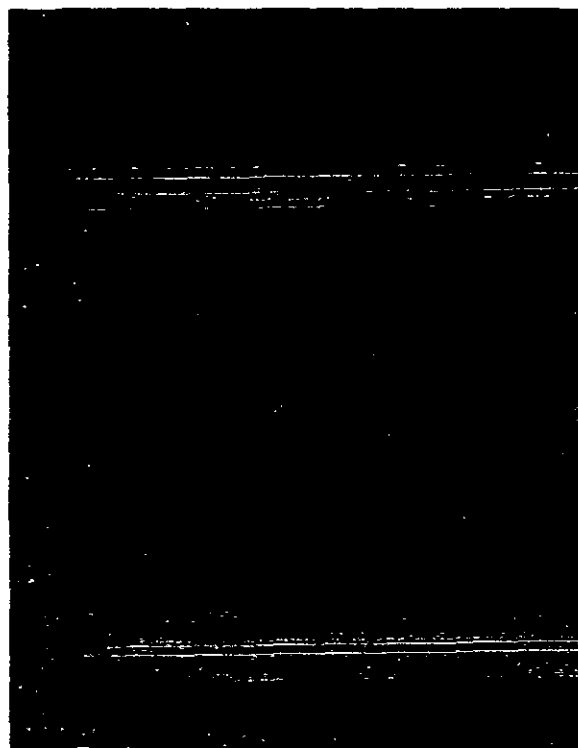
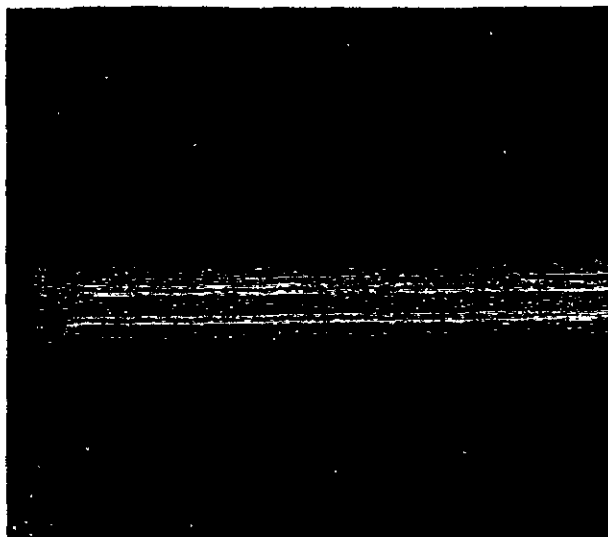
Pinochet has also tightened his control over the government and the military by expanding the size of the presidential staff and filling most posts with military officers, according to the press. In addition, he has assigned active duty officers to all top regional and local government positions, and, until the mid-1980s, filled all university rectorships and many secondary school directorships with military officers. Furthermore, officers occupy top positions in every government ministry and many specialized agencies. For instance, according to the press, the Deputy Foreign Minister is always a senior military man.

these officers lack policymaking authority but enable Pinochet to keep tabs on civilian ministers and managers. Moreover, they serve at the President's pleasure and, in their nonmilitary capacities, do not report to their respective service commanders.

#### The Army and Pinochet

Pinochet has been especially attentive to the needs of the Army, clearly the dominant service in Chile. Over the past 13 years the Army has grown rapidly—it currently comprises nearly half of the 124,000-strong armed forces—and has received the lion's share of military expenditures.

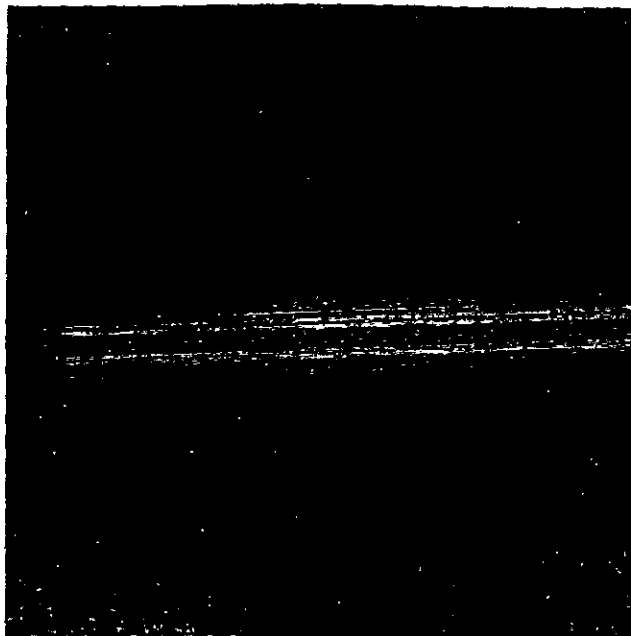
~~Secret~~



Pinochet also has sought to reinforce the Army's tradition of strict discipline and unquestioning obedience to the commander in chief—a notion that had unraveled prior to the 1973 coup, when the officer corps forced out the then Army commander. [REDACTED]

~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

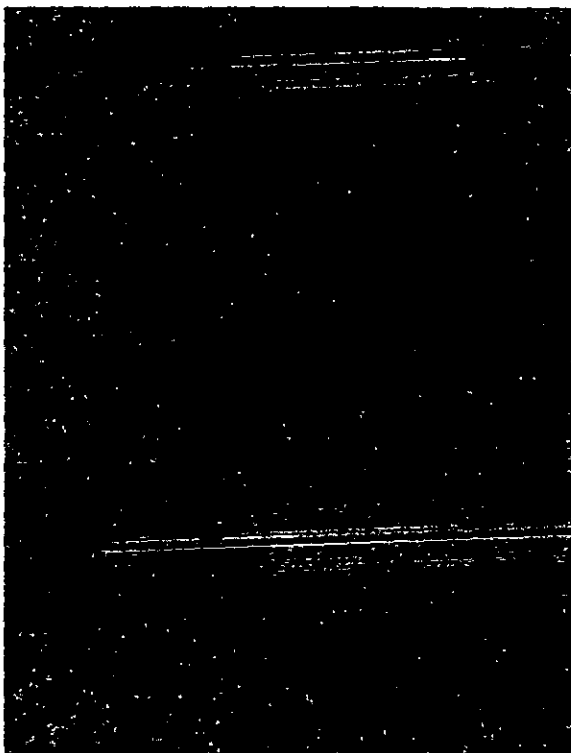


President Pinochet reviews Army unit [REDACTED]



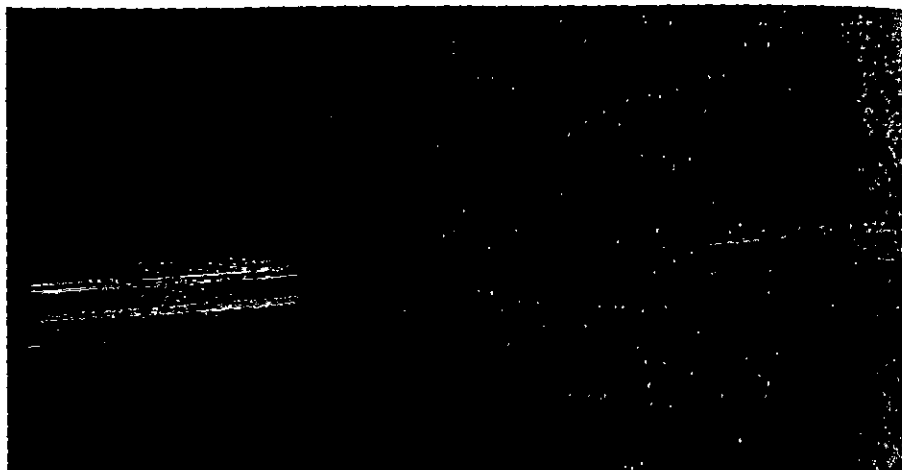
Despite Pinochet's efforts to squelch all dissent within the Army and exercise total control over it, his relationship with the officer corps has changed appreciably as the public's opposition to his rule has intensified over the past three years. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Army high command has traditionally depicted the service's main function as external defense, while relegating control of internal subversion to the national police and the intelligence services. Pinochet undermined this concept when he used the Army to help repress—with heavy loss of civilian life—a series of large antiregime protests in 1983 and in subsequent actions against demonstrators and slumdwellers. [REDACTED]



~~Secret~~

Chilean Navy passes in review.



### The Other Services

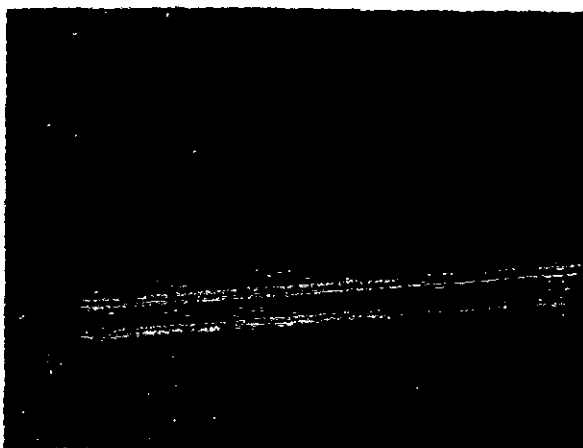
[REDACTED] the Air Force, Navy, and Carabineros (the paramilitary national police) play a secondary role in supporting Pinochet and staffing the government, although they participated in the 1973 coup and have since formally shared power with the Army. In combined manpower they slightly outnumber the senior service and have nearly twice as many officers, although we know of no case in which the hierarchies of the three services have contemplated challenging the Army militarily. Instead, we believe that their size, and especially the large number of officers, reflects a deliberate policy by Pinochet to try to co-opt these services in much the same way he has done with the Army. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Air Force as politically the most liberal of the four services, as attested by Pinochet's ouster of its commander in 1978 for advocating an early return to civilian rule. Although a large number of ranking Air Force officers resigned in sympathy, the remainder of the service accepted the President's handpicked replacement, [REDACTED]. We believe the incident strengthened Pinochet's power and illustrated how easily he could cow the Air Force. Nevertheless, this service almost certainly still harbors the greatest number of protransition officers, and its commander and representative on the junta since 1978, General Mattei, is by far Pinochet's most persistent military critic. [REDACTED]

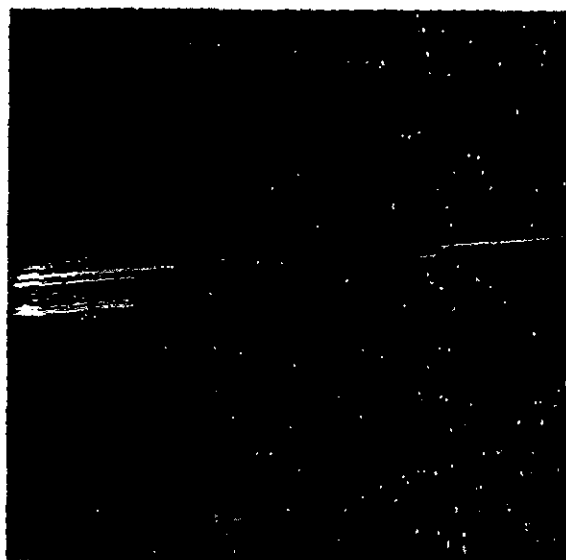
[REDACTED] the Navy to be more conservative politically than the Air Force, but its commander, Admiral Merino, also frequently complains of Pinochet's intransigence. As the only member to have served on the junta since 1973, Merino is its senior officer and would—until the junta selected a permanent successor—replace Pinochet should he die or become incapacitated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Carabineros have never enjoyed a role comparable even to the Navy's or the Air Force's in the government, partly because its officers generally are of lower-middle-class background, compared to the Air Force's and the Navy's upper-middle-class and upper-class officer corps, respectively. Moreover, academic studies reveal that the military establishment has traditionally viewed the Carabineros as subordinate to the other three services. Nevertheless, the Carabineros' manpower complement is second only to the Army's and they have a higher percentage of career noncommissioned and enlisted personnel than the senior service. Moreover, they are deployed in virtually all population centers, and many of their units have military training comparable to the Army's [REDACTED]

~~Secret~~



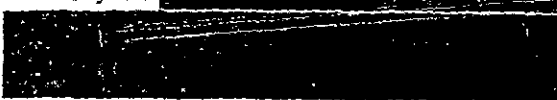
Carabinero officers



Carabinero killed during protest



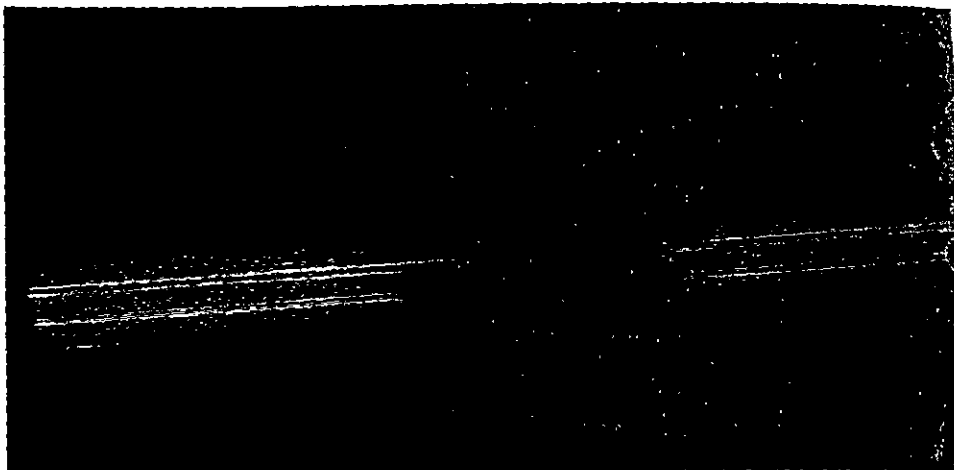
[REDACTED] Pinochet has limited contacts between Army officers and their counterparts in the other services. We believe this reflects his determination to insulate the Army from political discussions, keep the services divided, and preserve the hierarchical command concept he has fostered over the years.



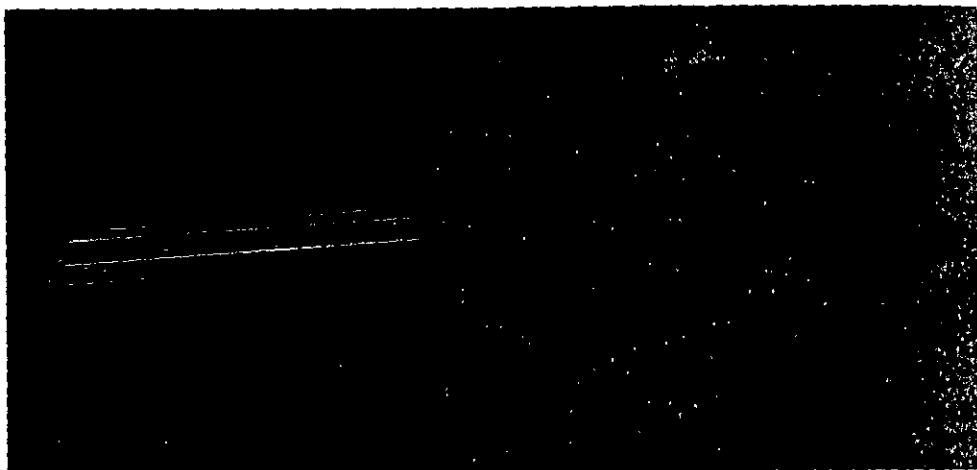
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

Carabineros round up slum  
area males. [REDACTED]



Army units with blackened  
faces conduct slum sweep.  
[REDACTED]



We believe that the discovery in August 1986 of huge arms caches supplied by Cuba to the Chilean Communist Party's (PCCCh) terrorist affiliate, the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR), and the FPMR's assassination attempt against Pinochet on 7 September 1986, shocked the armed forces into recognizing that the violence-prone far left is a real threat to the regime. [REDACTED] senior officers rallied behind Pinochet, and the junta quickly agreed to institute a 90-day state of siege. [REDACTED] that these events produced revulsion among the general public and sympathy for Pinochet, but also spurred

awareness that his policies were fomenting political polarization that threatened to undermine the nation's institutional fabric. Moreover, in our judgment, Pinochet overplayed his hand by using his temporarily strengthened position to crack down on the moderate opposition, cow his junta critics, and to try to buttress his chances of retaining power beyond 1989. Following the assassination attempt, he:



~~Secret~~

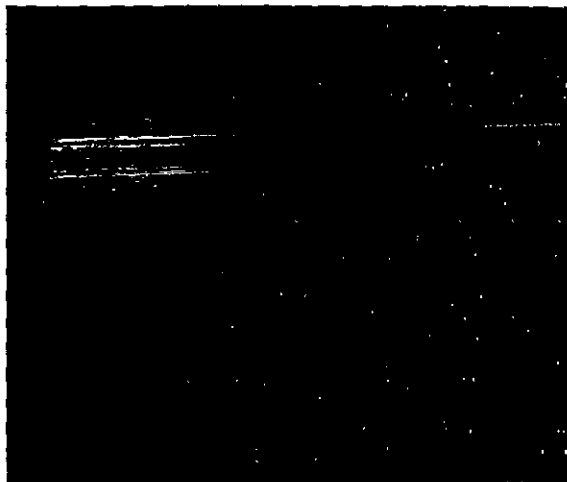


### *The Powers of the Military Junta*

*Following the 1973 coup, a four-man military junta was formed, consisting of the three armed services chiefs and the director of the Carabineros, which assumed full executive, legislative, and constitutional powers. Pinochet, as commander of the senior and largest service, was initially named President of the junta, with the understanding that this position would rotate among all junta members, according to academic studies. Nevertheless, within a year of the coup, Pinochet dominated the junta, changed his title to President of the Republic, and took charge of executive and administrative decisions.*

*Under the authoritarian Constitution of 1980, Pinochet left the junta, to which he appointed the next ranking Army general as his personal representative—whom he could replace at will. Pinochet remained the Commander in Chief of the Army and assumed the new title of Captain General of the armed forces, while the junta members from the Air Force, Navy, and Carabineros continued as commanders of their respective services—each of whom was exempted from automatic removal by the President. The new Constitution further restricted the powers of the junta in relation to the presidency and extended Pinochet's term until March 1989, with the possibility of reelection by plebiscite for another eight years.*

*Legislative and Constitutional Functions. The junta's legislative role is circumscribed by the executive's sole authority to initiate legislation on most subjects.*



*The junta's constitutional powers are also limited by the unanimity requirement; although the junta can initiate amendments to the Constitution, they must be approved by a national plebiscite, which only the President can convoke. Nevertheless, on several recent occasions the non-Army junta representatives have called publicly for a constitutional amendment to permit direct presidential elections in 1989.*



*Picking a New President. The Constitution specifies that, if Pinochet dies or is incapacitated, the junta selects his replacement by unanimous vote. During the selection process the presidency devolves on the most senior member of the junta, who currently is Navy representative Merino. If after 48 hours the junta cannot reach a unanimous decision, the National Security Council—which includes the four junta members, the Presidents of the Supreme Court and of*

the Council of State, and the Comptroller General—must choose the president by an absolute majority. The Constitution implies—but does not state specifically—that the new chief executive must either be a junta member or a senior line officer. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Army would ensure that either its junta representative or another senior Army general would be the new president. [REDACTED]

The provisions governing the nomination of the candidate for the 1989 plebiscite are identical, except that Pinochet himself will have a direct vote in the matter.

[REDACTED] because of its desire to maintain an image of unity, the military will make the decision—required by November 1988—on who to nominate for the plebiscite at the junta level, rather than refer it to the National Security Council. [REDACTED]

**Other Prerogatives.** The Constitution specifies that the junta must approve international treaties, authorize a state of siege, and accept or reject presidential orders replacing the non-Army members of the junta. In each of these categories, one or more junta members have shown considerable independence during the past three years. [REDACTED]

Thus, Admiral Merino threatened to block the 1985 treaty with Argentina settling the Beagle Channel dispute, claiming that it did not adequately protect the interests of the Navy. Also, on several recent occasions the junta rejected proposals by Pinochet to declare a state of siege, although it finally agreed to one after the 7 September assassination attempt against Pinochet. Finally, the Air Force and Carabinero representatives [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will block any attempt by Pinochet to remove them from the junta because of their opposition to his plans to stay in power beyond 1989. [REDACTED]



Site of ambush of President Pinochet's motorcade, 7 September 1986. [REDACTED]

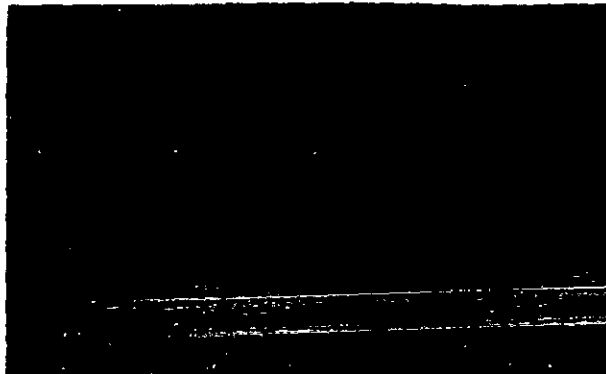
- Publicly accused protransition politicians, church officials, and journalists of being Marxist sympathizers, and used the state of siege primarily to harass the opposition press and moderate party leaders rather than to suppress the far left. [REDACTED]

- Began openly campaigning—starting with a mass rally on 9 September—for another presidential term, and [REDACTED] told junta and Cabinet members that he has a divine mission to guide Chile for the foreseeable future. [REDACTED]

These actions produced a backlash against Pinochet even among progovernment groups and generated considerable grumbling among senior military officers. [REDACTED] For instance, the officers of the Army's Fifth Division released an unprecedented statement repudiating the death squad killings and calling for speedy punishment of the guilty. [REDACTED]



~~Secret~~

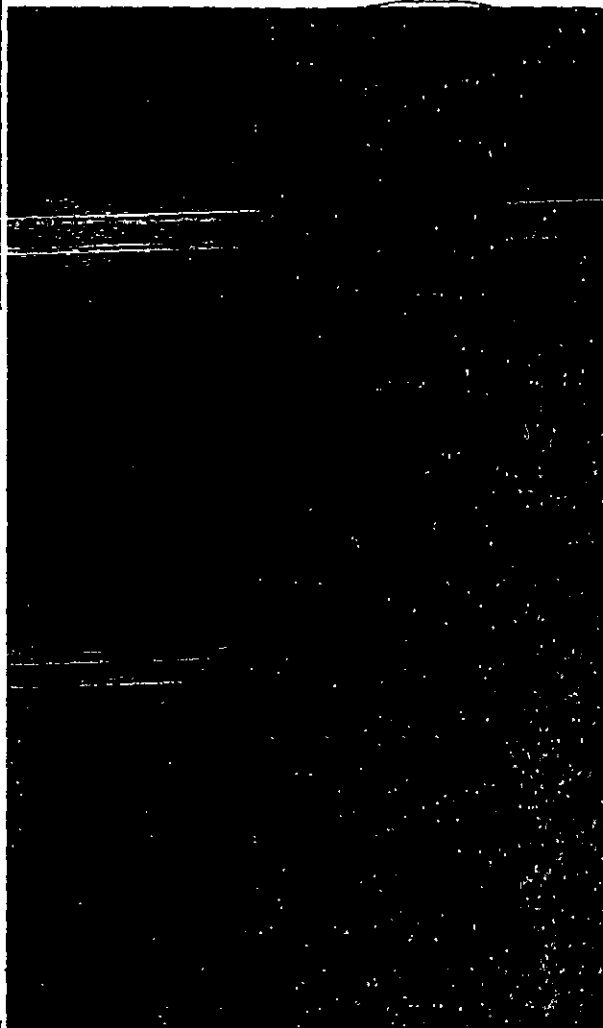


*Damaged vehicles from presidential motorcade.* [REDACTED]

#### **Rumblings Within the Junta**

In our view, an important development affecting Pinochet's standing with the armed forces was the willingness of three of the four junta members—manifested with increasing frequency during the second half of 1986—to defy Pinochet by dealing openly with moderate opposition leaders. We believe the junta members were motivated partly by concern over recent Communist efforts to destabilize Chile; [REDACTED] meanwhile, the moderate opposition parties were also influenced by the recent dramatic events to sever their ties to the far left. For instance, even before the assassination attempt, the Christian Democrats—the most influential opposition group—announced that they would end political collaboration with the Communists and their proviolence allies. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pinochet was highly irritated when, a week after the attempt on his life, his three critics on the junta publicly called for a dialogue on a transition formula and started a round of private talks with leaders of several moderate parties. [REDACTED]



Copyrighted material from unidentified publication has been removed.

This material may be viewed in the CIA Reading Room.



~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

Copyrighted material from an unidentified Chilean opposition magazine has been removed.

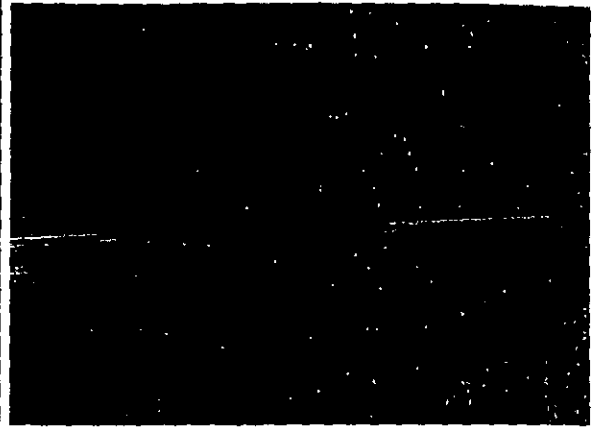
Copyrighted material from an unidentified Chilean opposition magazine has been removed.

This material may be view in the CIA Reading Room



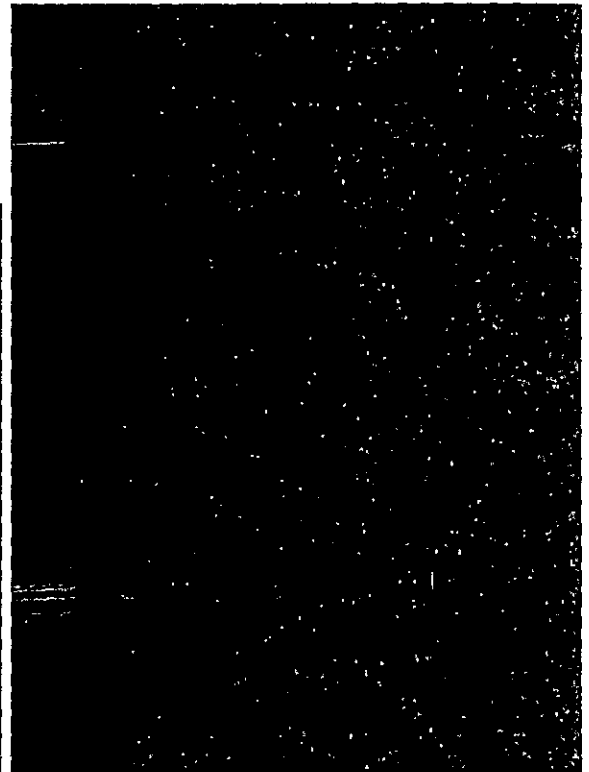
*Pinocchet bows (Chilean opposition magazine).*

[REDACTED]



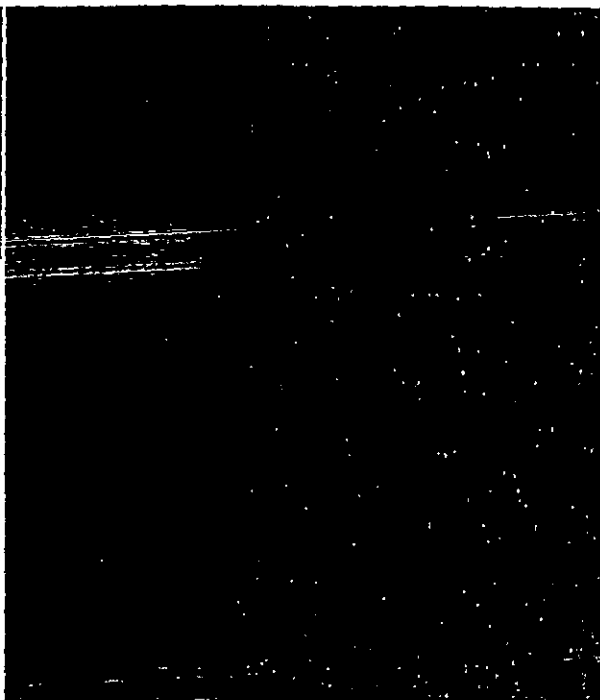
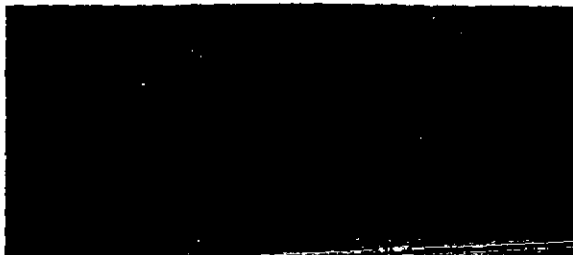
*Officer instructs troops:  
"Now repeat after me . . .  
I didn't do it." (Chilean opposition magazine)*

[REDACTED]



~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~

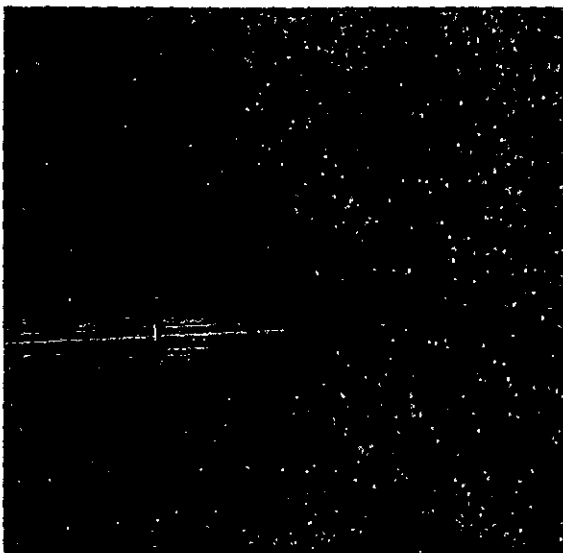


Copyrighted material from a unidentified Chilean opposition magazine has been removed.

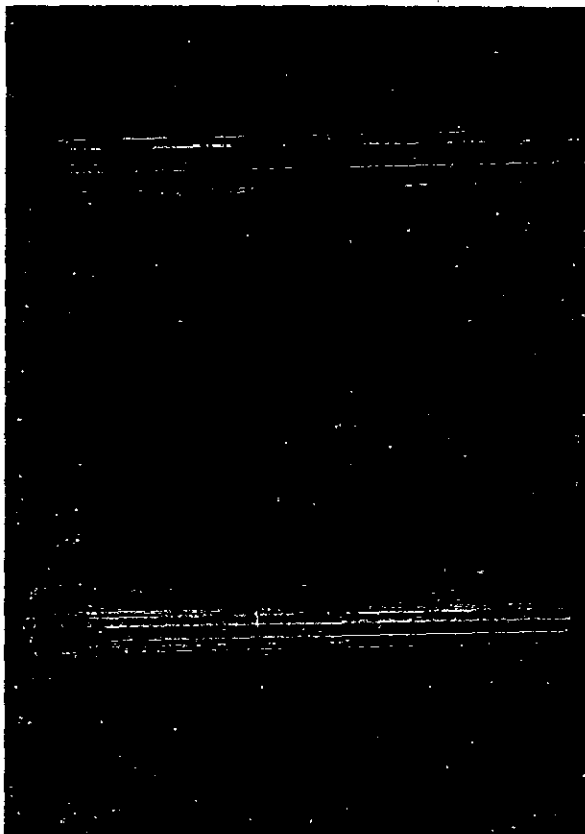
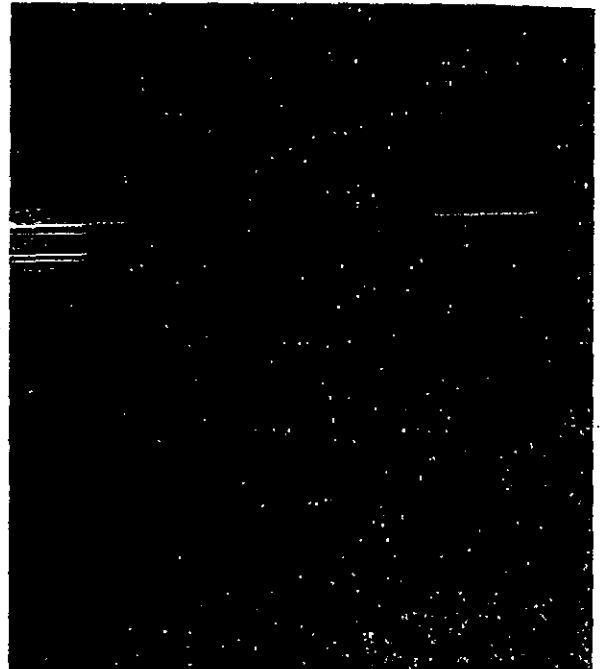
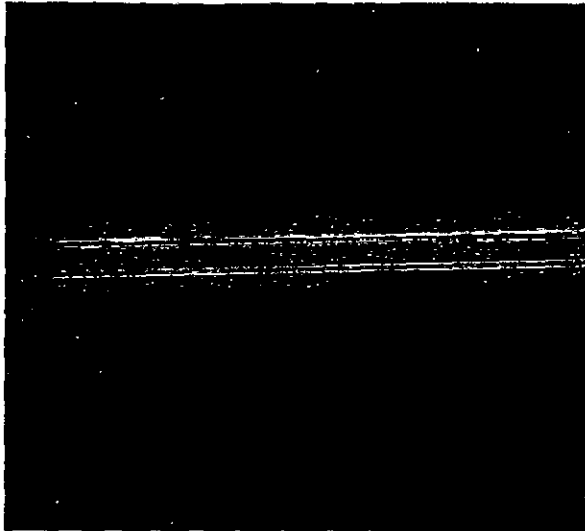
This material may be viewed in the CIA Reading Room.



Pinochet in his underwear: "And I had everything so well arranged for '89." (Chilean opposition magazine).



~~Secret~~



#### **Impact of Letelier Case Revelations**

In our judgment, a potentially serious threat to Pinochet's control over the military—and perhaps even to his hold on power—developed in February 1987 as the result of the travel of Army Major Armando Fernandez to the United States to plead guilty as an accessory in the murder of former Foreign Minister Orlando Letelier and an American citizen in Washington in 1976. Fernandez' revelations—including claims of Pinochet's involvement in a coverup—provoked an uproar in Chile, shocked the armed forces, and stunned Pinochet.

senior officers in all the services view these developments as a major embarrassment and are worried that the integrity of their institutions will be damaged severely unless Pinochet agrees—as requested by Washington—to bring to justice two retired senior officers implicated in the assassination. Pinochet, however, has given no indication that he will be guided by this view

~~Secret~~



#### Outlook

We believe that because most senior Chilean officers are committed to a transition beginning no later than 1989, relations between Pinochet and the military will become increasingly difficult over the next two years unless the President unexpectedly agrees to political liberalization and indicates that he plans to step down at the end of his term. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] we believe that ultimately the military, led by the Army, will decide that they have no recourse but to confront him and insist that he step aside in March 1989. In our view, the military will act in either of two ways; namely to try to persuade Pinochet to accept the more "honorable" and less divisive route—for the armed forces and the country—of a negotiated transition or, failing that, to demand that Pinochet desist from plans to be reelected for another eight-year term. [REDACTED]

#### Prospects for a Negotiated Transition

In our judgment, most Chileans, including the armed forces, are convinced that the best solution for the political dilemma their country faces is for the armed forces and responsible political party leaders to reach a firm agreement in the coming months on a formula for an orderly transition to civilian rule beginning in March 1989. Consequently, we believe that at least for the remainder of 1987 the junta, led by the Air Force, Navy, and Carabinero commanders and supported by increasing numbers of officers from all the

services, will try to reach such an understanding with the moderate opposition parties despite Pinochet's efforts to derail the process. We also expect that even if the junta and the opposition agree on a transition formula—in our view, there is a better-than-even chance that they will do so—it would still be necessary for senior military officers to try collectively to convince Pinochet to accept it. We believe that at the appropriate moment a representative body of senior officers would take this step. In the climate of public euphoria that the successful transition negotiations would generate, we judge that it would be extremely difficult for Pinochet to reject the advice of senior military officers that he agree to end his presidency on schedule. If he adamantly refused their advice and tried to overturn an agreed-upon transition formula calling for the election of a successor civilian government in 1989, in our view, he would risk antagonizing even the Army—his main source of support—and his refusal might prompt senior officers from all of the services to begin discussions on a direct confrontation of the President. [REDACTED]

Nevertheless, we recognize that the transition discussions might founder for a number of reasons. For instance, they probably will prosper only if the moderate parties continue to reject collaboration with the Communists and their allies, accept the junta's minimum negotiating conditions, and evolve into a more cohesive grouping headed by responsible leaders whom the military can trust. More ominously, the Communists could also disrupt the transition dialogue, since they would view an accommodation between the military and the moderate opposition as a threat to their plan to promote an all-out insurgency in Chile. Thus, they might try to scuttle the negotiations by once again attempting to kill Pinochet, assassinating senior military officers, or otherwise sharply escalating their terrorist campaign. [REDACTED]

#### The Military Moves Against Pinochet

We believe that the armed forces' unease will intensify over the next 12 months or so, especially if Pinochet, having rejected the advice of senior officers regarding a negotiated transition, continues to avoid

~~Secret~~

genuine political liberalization and persists in maneuvering to be renominated as the single candidate in the 1989 plebiscite. Under these circumstances, we believe that there is a better-than-even chance that by mid-1988 senior military officers—convinced that Pinochet could not win the plebiscite without massive fraud and fearing that his continued rule would tear the country apart—would demand that he agree publicly to step down at the end of his term. In our view, even at this point the senior officers would prefer an outcome that provided for the President to stay in office until the end of his term, hoping thereby to forestall dissidence within the armed forces and to project an image of acting to uphold the Constitution. We believe, however, that these senior officers would be prepared to oust Pinochet immediately if he rejected their demands and tried to cow them by the mere force of his authority. [REDACTED]

The military could move earlier than mid-1988 if Pinochet acted in total disregard of the wishes of senior officers or maneuvered more and more openly to perpetuate his hold on the presidency—although we judge that there is only a slim chance that this could occur in the next few months. For example, even though available evidence does not indicate that the turmoil surrounding the revived Letelier case has reached the point of threatening Pinochet's hold on power any time soon—although it has strengthened the resolve of those who are opposed to his staying in office beyond 1989—we believe that it has the potential for becoming a major crisis. This could happen if Pinochet stonewalls on the case and also adopts harsh measures against those who want the case cleared up or who "know too much," including retired military officers. The result, we believe, would be that he would alienate the armed forces and perhaps precipitate a move by senior officers to oust him. Senior officers might also move earlier in response to new intimidating acts by Pinochet against junta members determined to oppose his plebiscite nomination, or a series of public statements that he intends to be the government's candidate in 1989 regardless of junta objections. [REDACTED]

We anticipate that any discussions among senior officers who plan to confront Pinochet will be very closely held, if for no other reason than that the

plotters will want to avoid detection [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Although figures such as the Army representative on the junta, the Army Vice Commander, and extreme hardliners within the service probably would not be asked to participate in a confrontation with Pinochet, support from the Air Force, Navy, and Carabineros would be crucial, particularly because, in our view, it would be too risky for Army officers to act on their own. Nevertheless, we believe that any military move against Pinochet is likely to catch most Chileans [REDACTED] by surprise. [REDACTED]

We are uncertain about how Pinochet would react to a direct challenge from a group of senior officers representing all of the services, but we think he probably would either reject their demands outright or agree in principle but with the intention of outmaneuvering his challengers once the crisis dissipates. In our judgment, however, it is unlikely that a group of determined officers who had decided that they had no choice but to confront Pinochet would be swayed either by an attempt to face them down or an evasion of a real commitment to changed policies. They probably would anticipate these maneuvers as Pinochet's likely response, and we believe that they would demand his resignation if he did not promptly satisfy their minimum conditions. [REDACTED]

#### Alternative Scenarios

##### **Pinochet Stays in Power**

Notwithstanding our forecast that unease in the Army over Pinochet's plans will intensify during the next two years, there is some chance that the President can persuade the officer corps to support him for another term. He probably would appeal to the Army by using the theme of a continuing threat posed by the Communists, especially if the latter escalate their violent actions in the coming months, and even pro-transition Army officers might rally behind him at [REDACTED]



~~Secret~~

least temporarily. He also probably would emphasize the divisions within the democratic opposition or any continuing collaboration by the moderates with the Communists—such as in staging antiregime protests during 1987—to buttress his argument that Chile's current crop of civilian leaders is "unreliable." Pinochet would undoubtedly focus his efforts on the Army, but, in our view, he would also try to ensure that the other services accepted an Army decision to continue backing him. The President, in our view, would probably then seek to manipulate the 1989 plebiscite—whether through control of the media, restrictive electoral registration laws, or, in the final instance, outright fraud—to assure his reelection.

We also believe it is possible—but not likely—that Pinochet could persuade the Army's hierarchy to support an unconstitutional extension of his presidency in response to efforts by the junta members of the other services to block his renomination. Under these circumstances, Pinochet might dismiss the junta, declare the Constitution in abeyance, and rule by decree and with the sole support of the Army for an indefinite period. This, in our view, would be an exceedingly risky course of action that probably would generate an unprecedented level of dissension between the Army and the other services and spur groups of senior officers to begin plotting actively to remove the President by force.

#### **Pinochet Assassinated**

The leftist terrorists who narrowly missed killing Pinochet in September 1986

We believe that if they succeed—an ever-present possibility—the next president would most probably be a senior Army general, such as junta representative Gordon or Army Vice Commander Sinclair. Either man would almost certainly crack down on the opposition and assiduously seek out Pinochet's killers. Nevertheless, we judge that no likely military successor to Pinochet would have either the desire or ability to imitate his predecessor's goal of retaining power indefinitely. We believe that, after the initial post-assassination period of repression, the armed forces

and the moderate opposition would hammer out a transition program to be implemented either during or after the 1988-89 time frame envisioned in the Constitution.

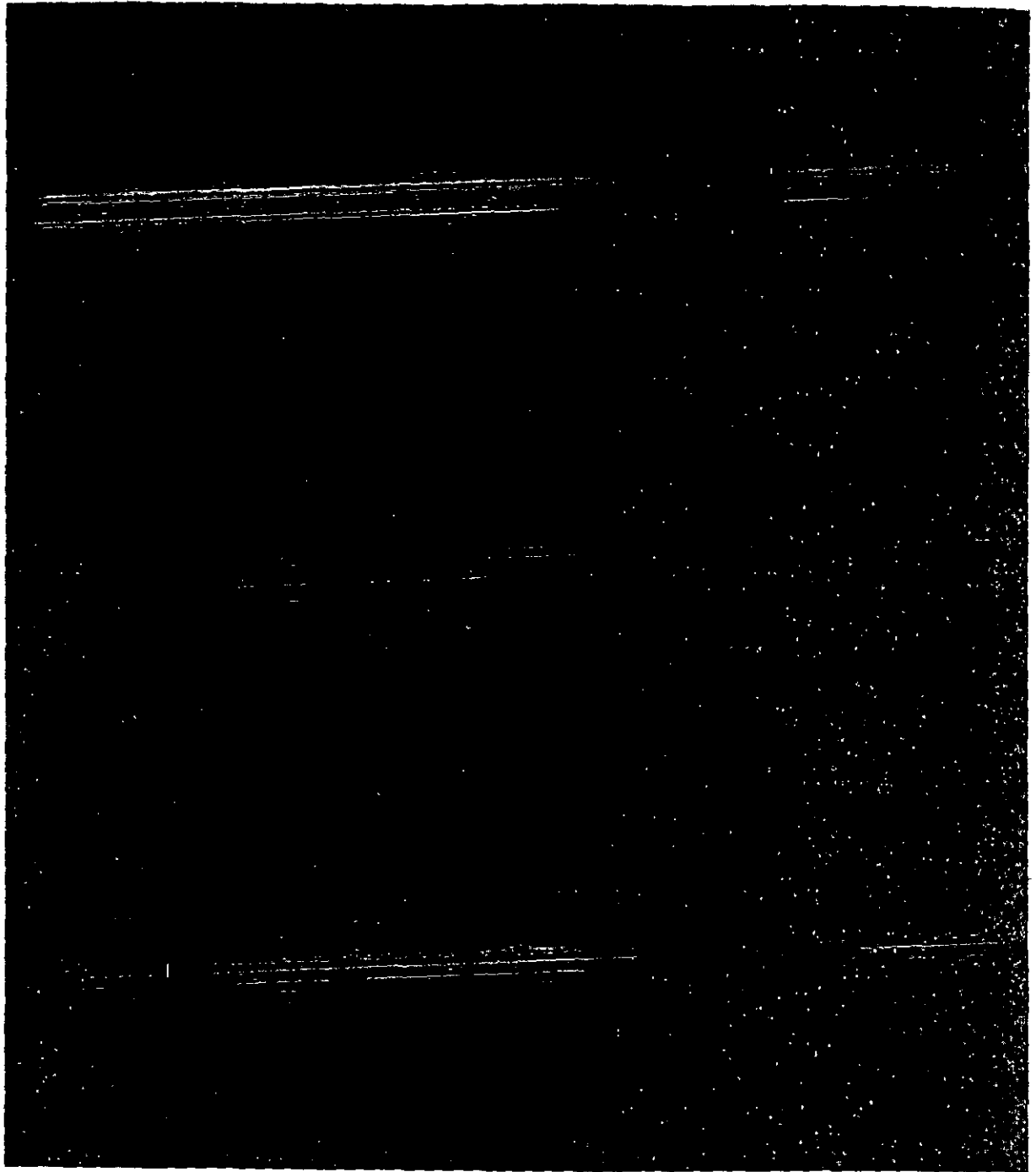
#### **Implications for the United States**

We believe that either the junta or the military will advance Washington's goal of fostering a transition to democratic rule in Chile if they force Pinochet to accept political liberalization and commit himself to step down in 1989. Such a development, in our view, would help stabilize the Chilean political scene by isolating the violent left, cementing the moderate opposition's decision not to work with the Communists, and lessening the potential for serious human rights abuses by the military. Over time—and especially if a popularly elected civilian President succeeds Pinochet in 1989—the Communists' chances of promoting revolution would dissipate and the party might eventually abandon its strategy of armed struggle.

If Pinochet prevails in his plan to remain in power after 1989, in our view, US interests could be adversely affected in several ways. For example, the prospect of Pinochet as President-for-life would undermine the reputation of the armed forces among the Chilean public, promote major dissension within the military, and increase the likelihood of civil war by strengthening the far-left and spurring elements of the moderate opposition to make common cause with the radicals. As the most effective and well-armed subversive force in the country, the Communist party and its allies would seek to lead a Sandinista-style popular uprising against the military regime that could eventually bring a Soviet- and Cuban-backed government to power in Santiago. Moreover, as the discovery of huge caches of Cuban-supplied arms and the assassination attempt in 1986 demonstrate, the Communists and affiliated terrorists groups are determined to try to bring the Pinochet regime down by force. Even if they failed to topple Pinochet, an all-out leftist insurgency in Chile probably would impact negatively on neighboring democracies.

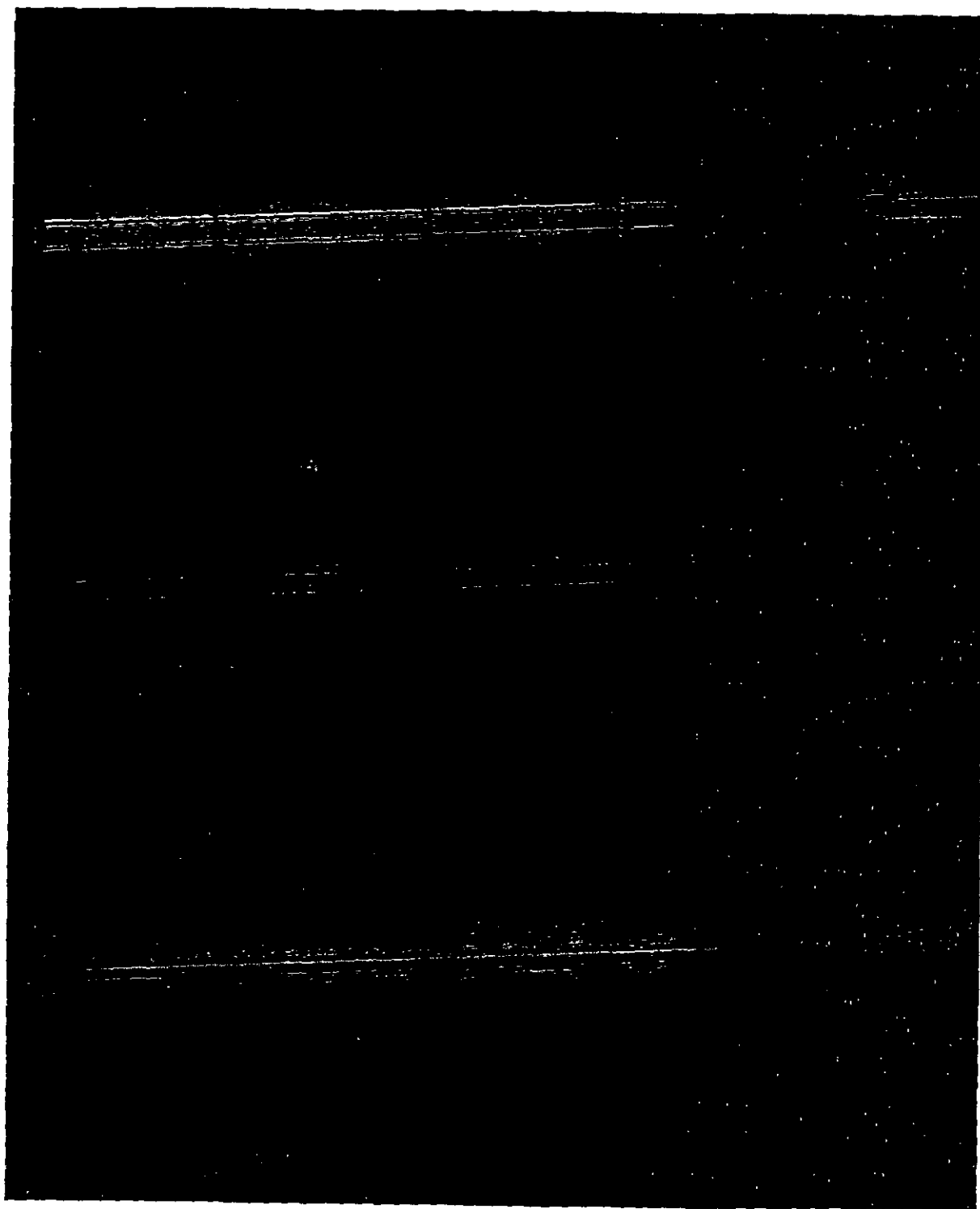
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



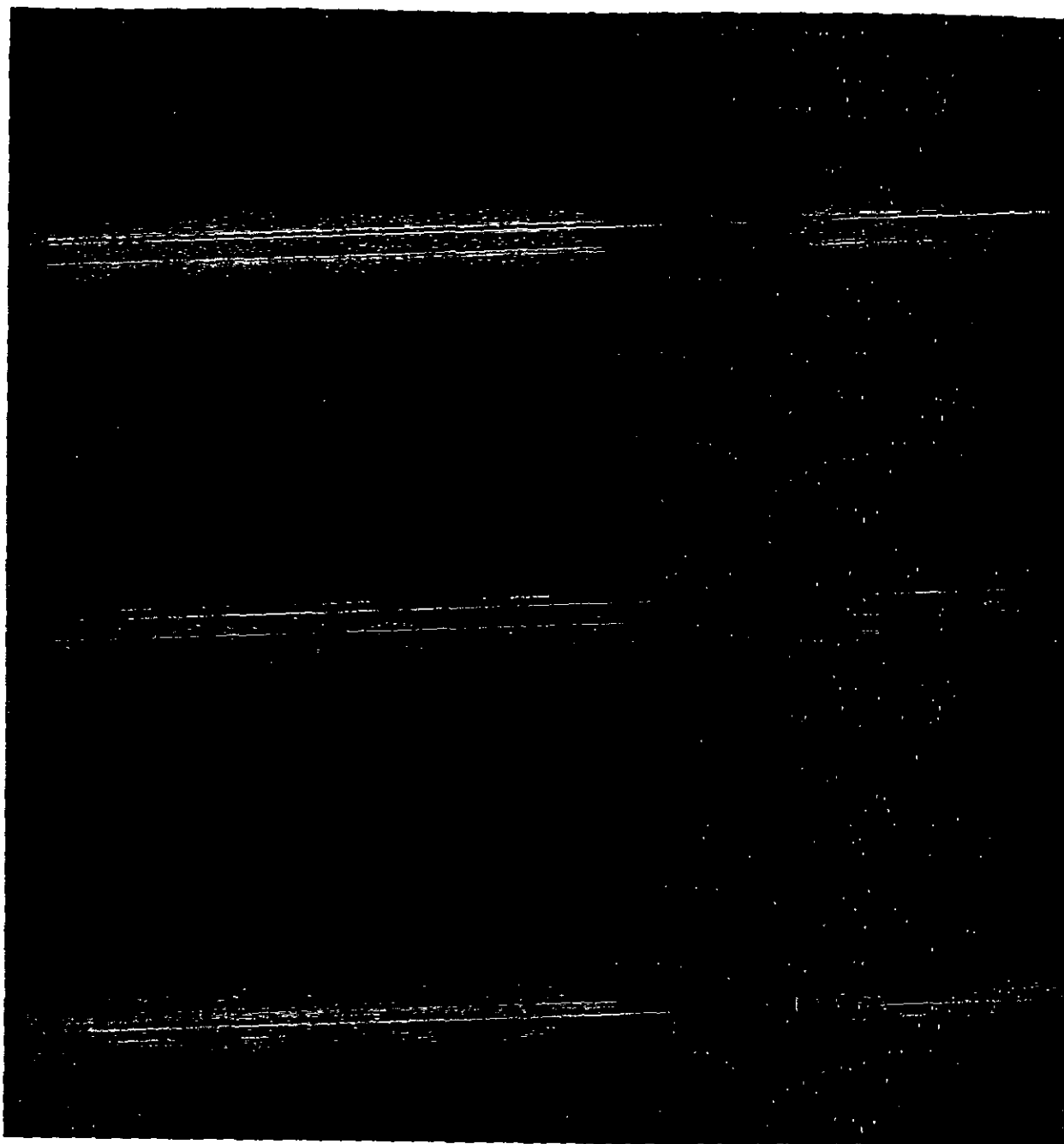
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



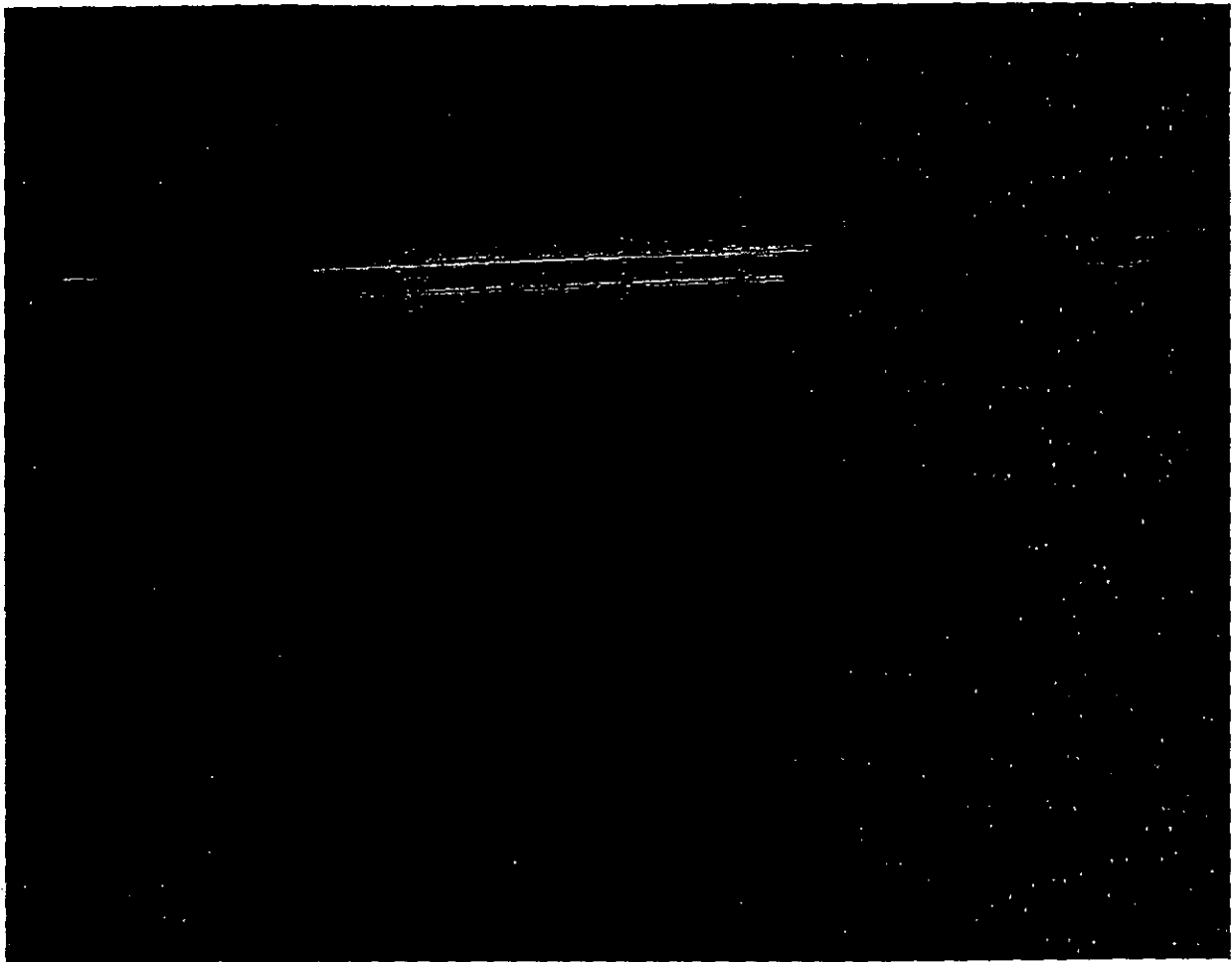
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



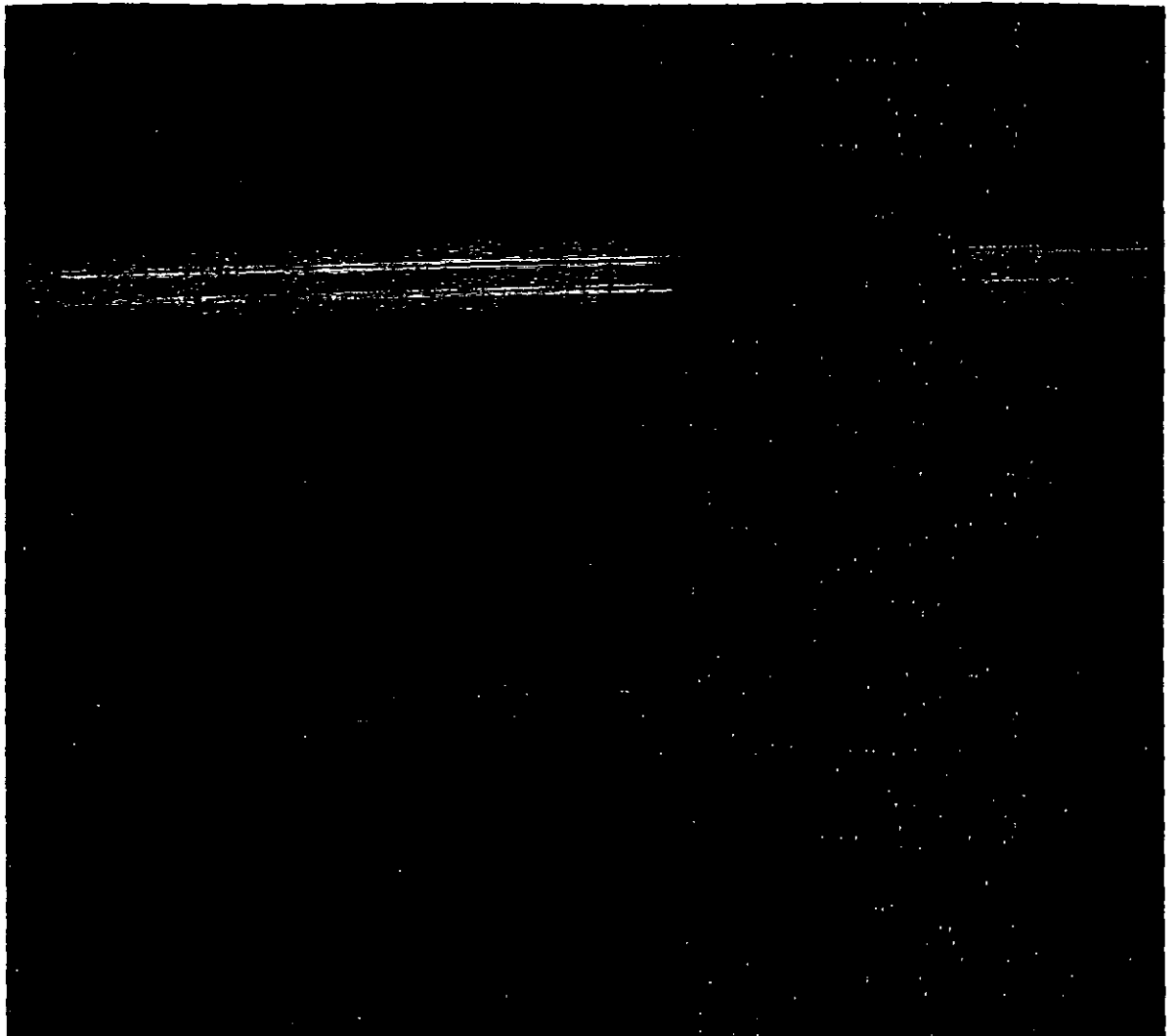
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



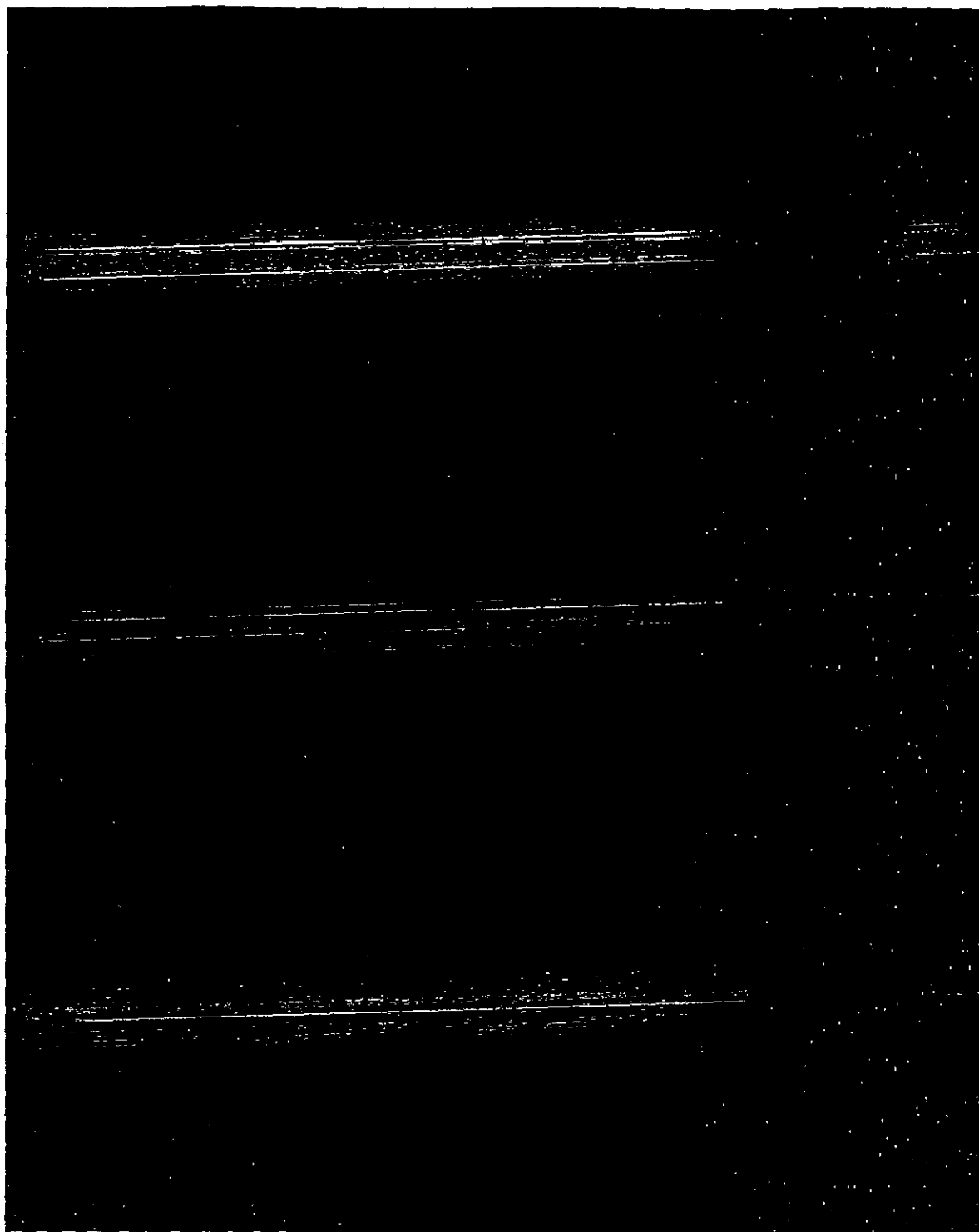
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



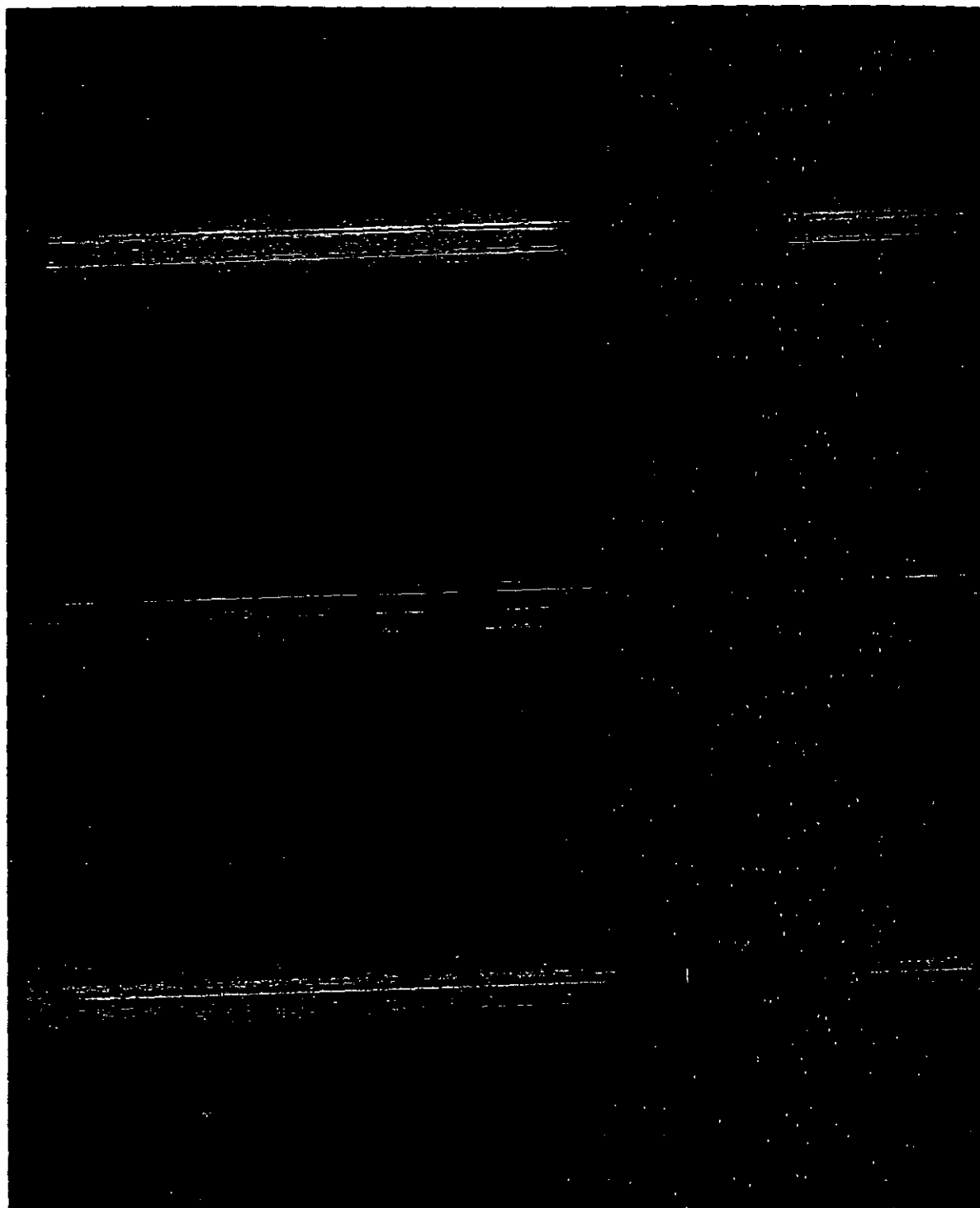
~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~



Reverse Blank

~~Secret~~



~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~